

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 10982

E.O. 11652:GDS
TAGS: ASEC, OTRA, CSCE, UR, US
SUBJECT: MFA COMPLAINT AGAINST EMBASSY TRAVELERS'
PHOTOGRAPHY

1. MFA USA DIVISION COUNSELOR V. I. TRIFONOV LODGED COMPLAINT WITH CONSULAR COUNSELOR ON MAY 12 AGAINST EMBASSY TDY OFFICER KAY OLIVER AND SPOUSE JOHN MILLER IN CONNECTION WITH TRIP TO UKRAINE AND CENTRAL ASIA DURING PERIOD APRIL 4-19. ACCORDING TO TRIFONOV, IN ODESSA ON APRIL 17 THE COUPLE SNAPPED PHOTOS OF "CLOSED" FACILITIES, ALLEGEDLY TRIED TO TAKE PHOTO OF SOVIET CITIZEN WHO DID NOT GIVE HIS PERMISSION TO DO SO, AND TRIED TO TAKE OTHER "TENDENTIOUS" PICTURES. DURING INTERROGATION WITH INTOURIST IN ODESSA THEY ALLEGEDLY BEHAVED RUDELY AND CLAIMED THEY WERE TOURISTS. TRIFONOV REQUESTED EMBASSY TO SEE TO IT THAT ITS OFFICIALS NOT COMMIT SUCH VIOLATIONS IN FUTURE.

2. CONSULAR COUNSELOR RESPONDED THAT HE HAD NO COMMENT SINCE HE KNEW NOTHING OF THIS MATTER, BUT THAT HE WOULD REPORT THE COMPLAINT.

3. EMBASSY COMMENT: DURING TRIP TO TRANSCAUCASIAN AND
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CENTRAL ASIA FROM APRIL 4-19, TDY EMBOFF KAY OLIVER, TO BEST OF HER KNOWLEDGE, TOOK NO PICTURES OF CLOSED FACILITIES. SHE IS NOT AWARE THAT HER HUSBAND TOOK SUCH PICTURES AND THINKS IT IS A SAFE ASSUMPTION THAT HE DID NOT. SHE TOOK PICTURES WHICH INCLUDED BRIDGES AS PART OF THE OVERALL LANDSCAPE OF THE CITY, A PANORAMIC PHOTO OF TBILISI FROM ATOP MOUNT MTATAMUNDA, A PHOTO OUTSIDE

A COTTON GIN IN BUKHARA, AND THE HARBOR WITH POTEMKIN STEPS IN ODESSA. SHE DID TAKE PHOTOS OF SOVIET CITIZENS WITHOUT ASKING PERMISSION, BUT ONLY FROM A DISTANCE, AS IN A MARKET. IN NO INSTANCE DID SHE PHOTOGRAPH ANYONE WHO ASKED THAT SHE NOT DO SO. SHE TOOK PICTURES OF SUBSTANDARD HOUSING THAT COULD BE CONSIDERED TENDENTIOUS BY THE SOVIETS.

4. TDY EMBOFF AND SPOUSE WERE DETAINED OUTSIDE A MARKET IN ODESSA, THEN TAKEN TO A HOTEL. DURING "INTERROGATION" WITH INTOURIST OFFICIALS AT THE HOTEL, TDY EMBOFF AND SPOUSE DID NOT SAY THAT THEY WERE TOURISTS. AT THE OUTSET MS. OLIVER STATED THAT SHE WORKED IN THE U.S. EMBASSY. WHEN OFFICIALS ASKED IF HER SPOUSE ALSO WORKED HERE, SHE REPLIED IN THE NEGATIVE. WHEN IT DEVELOPED THAT THEY ASSUMED THIS MEANT SPOUSE HAD A TOURIST PASSPORT, MS. OLIVER IMMEDIATELY SAID THAT HE HAD A DIPLOMATIC PASSPORT. MS. OLIVER AND SPOUSE DID NOT BEHAVE RUDELY DURING THIS "INTERROGATION.

5. MS. OLIVER'S NOTE FOR TRAVEL TO TALLINN LAST WEEK WAS TURNED DOWN ON GROUNDS SHE HAD PREVIOUSLY "VIOLATED TRAVEL REGULATIONS." EMBASSY HAS BY DIPLOMATIC NOTE REQUESTED MFA TO SPECIFY WHICH TRAVEL REGULATIONS SHE ALLEGEDLY HAD VIOLATED. OTHER THAN THAT, WE PLAN TO DROP MATTER UNLESS DEPARTMENT INSTRUCTS OTHERWISE. MATLOCK
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